



APPOINTMENT PROTOCOL

Unfortunately Covid 19 has left all dental practices including us quite behind. This is because most people stayed away during 2020 and are now looking to come back for check ups and treatment. We now have to extend appointment times which means less appointments in the diary and we now have to wear respirators when using dental drills. As you can imagine respirators can be exhausting to wear and staff can only wear them for 45 minutes at a time. We also have to let our rooms fallow for 30 minutes after treatments, which means two dentists have to rotate our three rooms. Treatment times are ridged in the diary to allow for a smooth running surgery as much as possible, we therefore can not book any patient straight in for treatment.

All patients must have a check up first and come back for treatment. Our wait times are approximately 5 weeks for check ups and 8 weeks for treatments.

Check up with no scale and polish

Although we appreciate our patients like to have their teeth cleaned as part of their check up, in order to keep staff or anyone in the building as safe as possible it is not a service we can offer during the pandemic. This is unlikely to change any time soon. If you need a deep clean you will be asked to come back to a separate clinic as we have to wear different PPE, and this PPE can not be worn for more than 45 minutes at any one time due to health and safety implications. This type of deep clean moves into band 2 (please see NHS website for definitions of cleans on the banding system) If you would like a band 1 clean with your check up then a hand scale will take place only.

It is extremely important that even though we hand scale with your check up, we still check your oral health. When you have a check-up, we ensure you have no dental decay, that the soft tissues in your mouth are healthy and you show no sign of oral cancer. We encourage all patients to keep to their recall, but please bear in mind, those that clinically need a clean will be asked to come back.

Lack of emergency appointments

Due to the backlog we are left with and the continuous addition of patients with dental issues and need for routine care, we do not have the luxury of reserving back appointments as we did in the past. All fast available appointments are needed for people in pain and these are offered out days and sometimes up to two weeks in advance. We feel to ask a patient to call back the next day because we want to reserve the emergency gap for patients on the day is unfair to that person on the phone – therefore all emergency gaps are offered on a first come first served basis.

Dental emergency

For a *true* dental emergency we would always do our best to accommodate straight away without delay. Each patient will be assessed for their emergency need and then offered a suitable appointment or referred to one of the dental hubs via 111.

Please note a true dental emergency that would warrant a same day appointment is defined as the following:

Swelling of the face

Pain that will not ease with pain killers

Bleeding that will not stop

A child in distress with dental pain

Other dental issues such as a lost crown, broken tooth with no pain etc warrants an urgent appointment and you will be offered the next available. Priority must be given to those that are vulnerable, in pain or with infection first.

Hygienist

At present the hygienist is only working Friday afternoons – we hope to be able to accommodate more days for her once dental restrictions are lifted.

Appointment times

As we always do, we will try to accommodate your request for certain times as best we can. Please bear in mind that right now appointments are very limited and we may need you to be more flexible to get you seen.

Protocol

The door will be locked when you arrive for your appointment – please arrive at your appointment time in case it is raining and wait for us outside. You do not need to knock we know you are waiting and will come for you when the patient inside has left.

Please come wearing a mask, we request you wear a mask even in the surgery when speaking with the dentist at a distance of 2 metres. When she is ready to look inside your

mouth you can remove the mask. We ask when you move from the dental chair you put the mask back on before you speak, and wear it until you leave the building.

Please come alone, if you require a chaperone on medical grounds please let us know so we can accommodate you.

Your temperature will be taken on arrival, sometimes if it is warm outside or you have walked you might appear to have a temperature when in fact you do not. In this instance we will ask you to stand in the shade and re-test you again 10 minutes later – please do not be offended if we ask to re-test you, its for the safety of everyone including yourself.

You will be asked to wash or sanitise your hands on arrival and then be escorted to reception where we ask you to sign consent forms before taking you into the surgery to see the dentist.

Please bring a list of any current medication you take

Patient portal

We have now gone paperless. This is to limit the amount of time patients are in the surgery and to help with cross infection (handling bits of paper between patient and reception). These forms are mandatory including a covid health questionnaire, this must be completed before we can allow you to enter the practice. If you are unable to use the portal please call reception and we will help you.

Thank you and stay safe
Blackfen Dental care